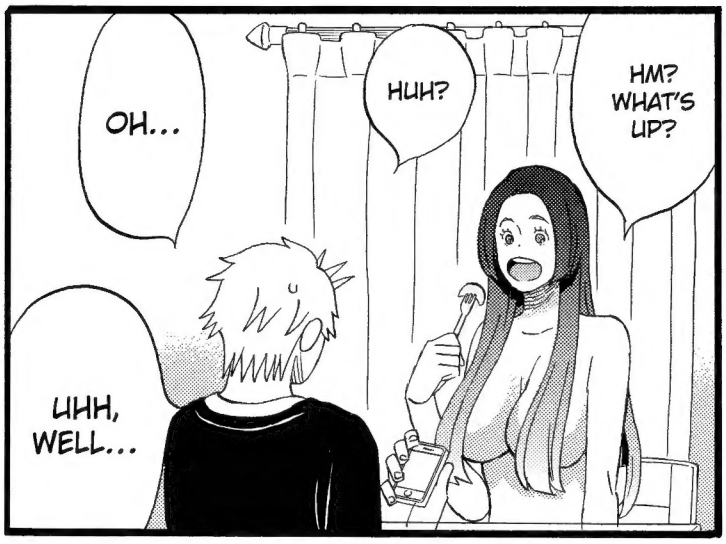
Chapter 20: Kirishima-kun's Special Day

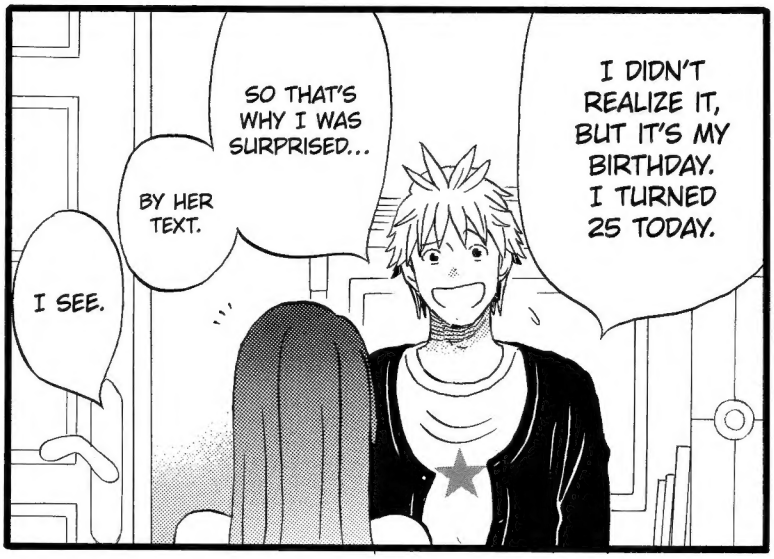
HM?
BWWW...
7:15
Little sis
Good morning!
BWWW...
...OH!

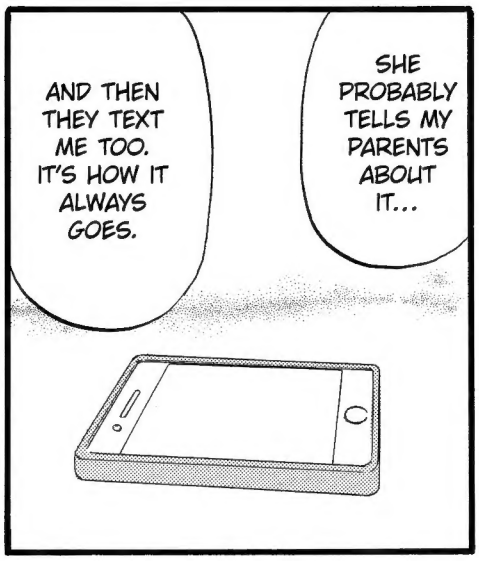
DID SOMETHING URGENT COME UP?
NO, NO... IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT.

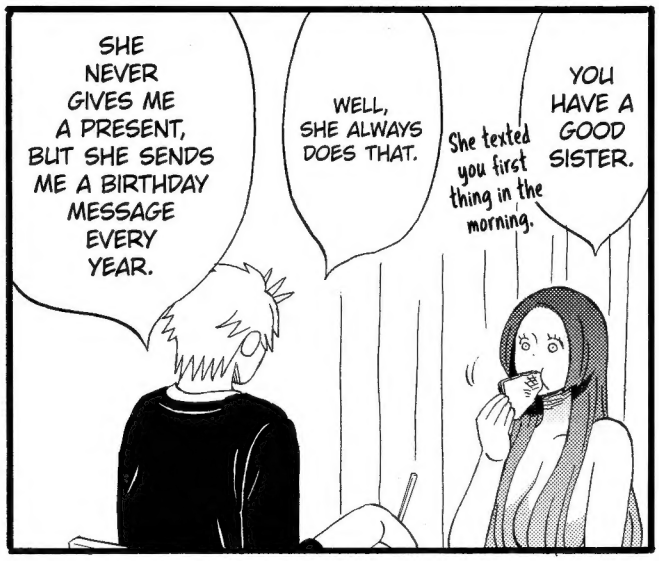

HM? WHAT'S UP?
HUH?
OH...
UHH, WELL...

IT'S A HAPPY BIRTHDAY MESSAGE...
Heh heh heh...
FROM MY SISTER.

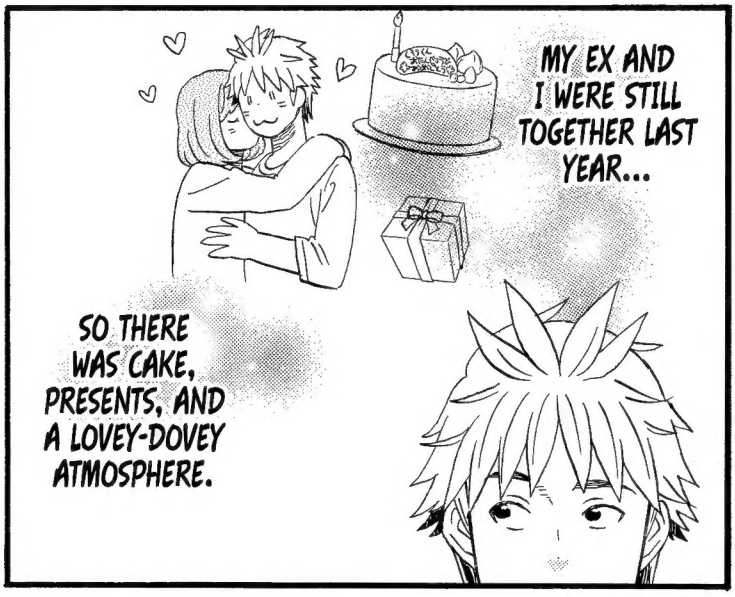
SO IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY TODAY...
THAT'S RIGHT. I COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT IT.

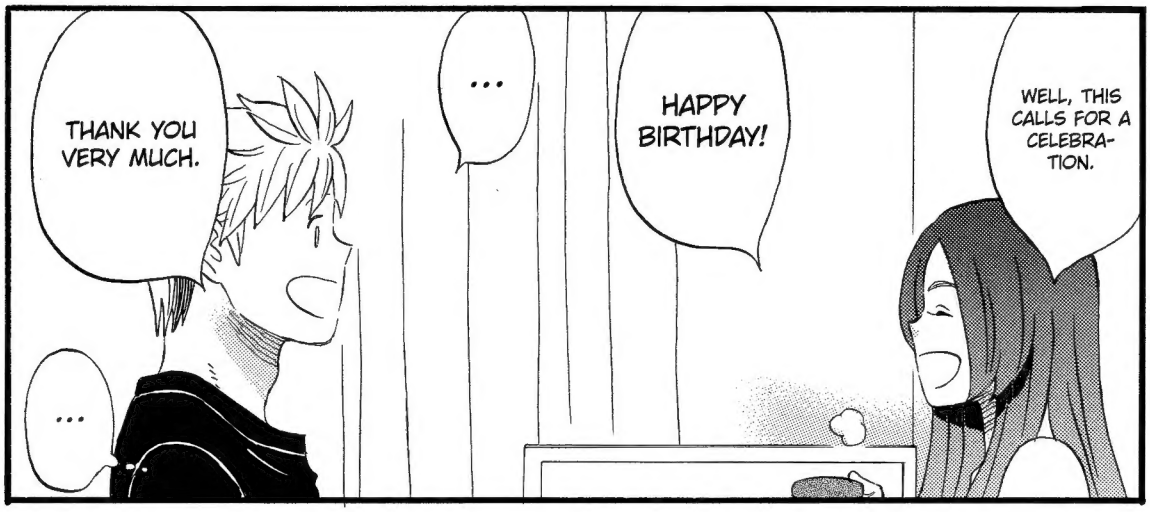

I DIDN'T REALIZE IT, BUT IT'S MY BIRTHDAY. I TURNED 25 TODAY.
SO THAT'S WHY I WAS SURPRISED...
BY HER TEXT.
I SEE.

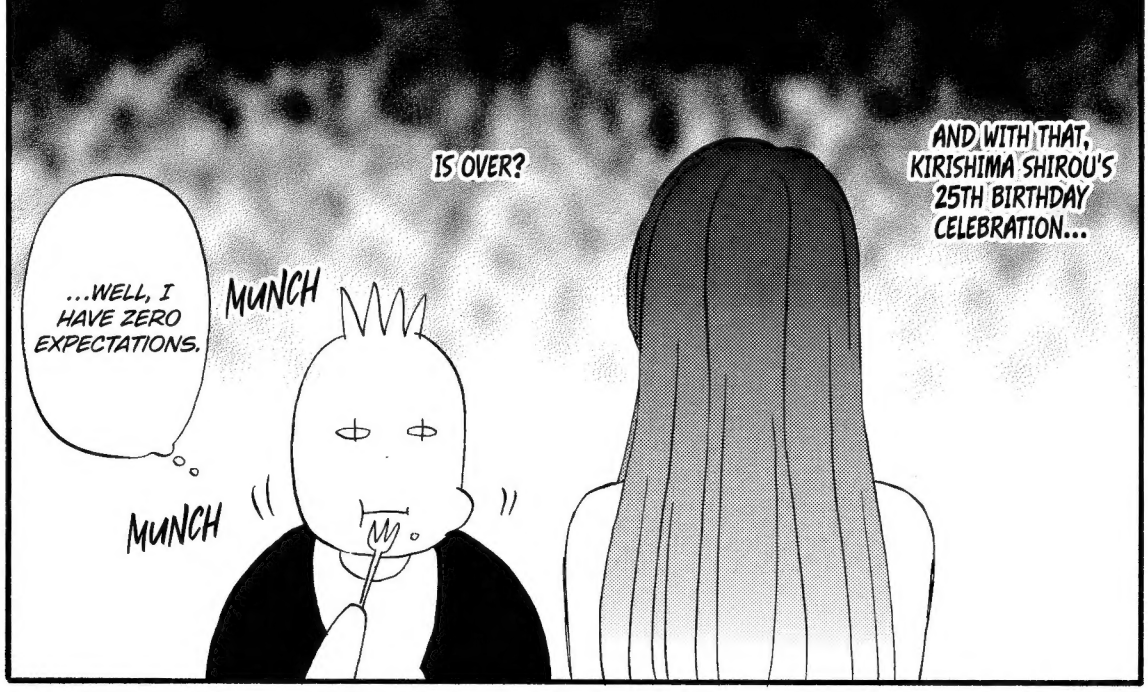

AND THEN THEY TEXT ME TOO. IT'S HOW IT ALWAYS GOES.
SHE PROBABLY TELLS MY PARENTS ABOUT IT...


SHE NEVER GIVES ME A PRESENT, BUT SHE SENDS ME A BIRTHDAY MESSAGE EVERY YEAR.
WELL, SHE ALWAYS DOES THAT.
She texted you first thing in the morning.
YOU HAVE A GOOD SISTER.

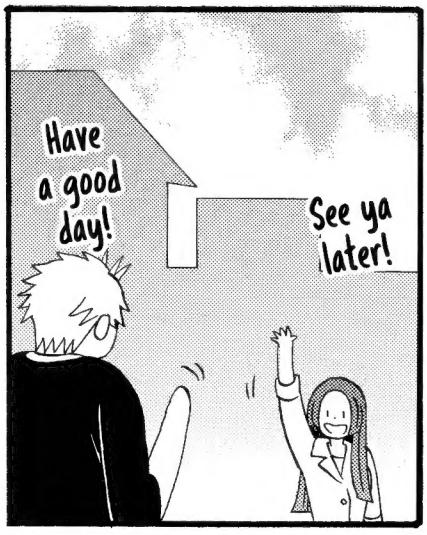
I WONDER HOW THIS YEAR'S BIRTHDAY WITH ISHIMURA-SAN WILL TURN OUT...?

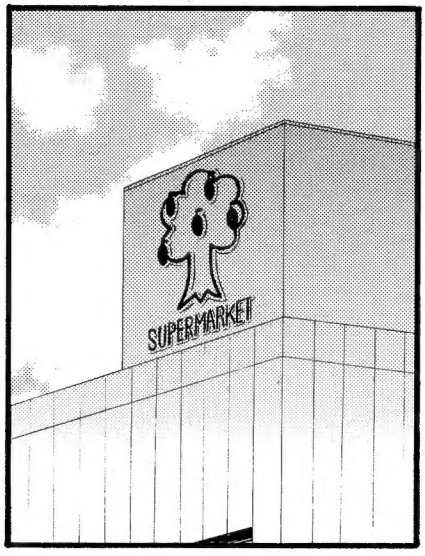

MY EX AND I WERE STILL TOGETHER LAST YEAR...
SO THERE WAS CAKE, PRESENTS, AND A LOVEY-DOVEY ATMOSPHERE.

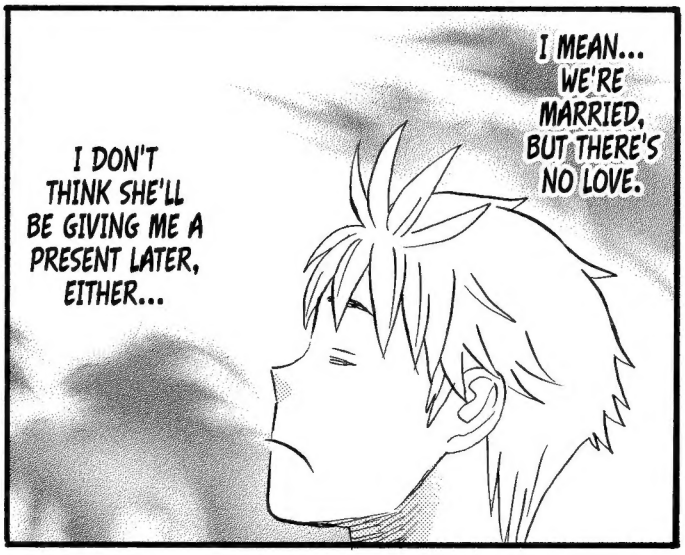

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
...
...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
WELL, THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRA-TION.

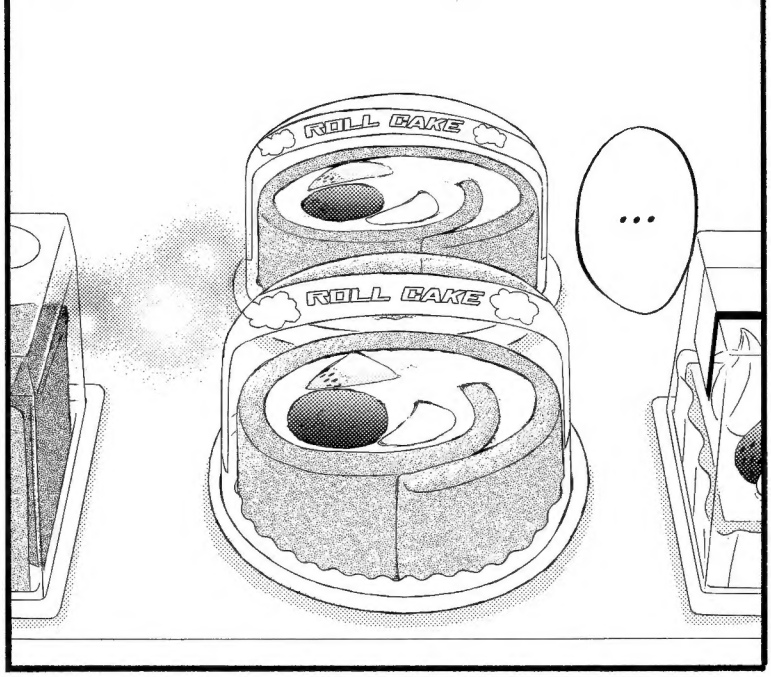

AND WITH THAT, KIRISHIMA SHIROU'S 25TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION...
IS OVER?
...WELL, I HAVE ZERO EXPECTATIONS.
MUNCH
MUNCH

I CAN'T IMAGINE ISHIMURA-SAN BEING ALL LOVEY-DOVEY JUST BECAUSE IT'S MY BIRTHDAY.
Fwshh...
Clack
Clack

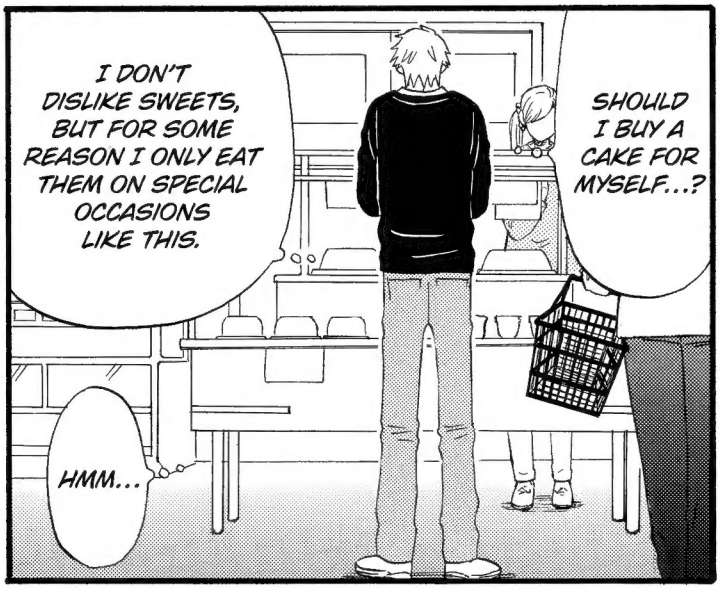

Have a good day!
See ya later!

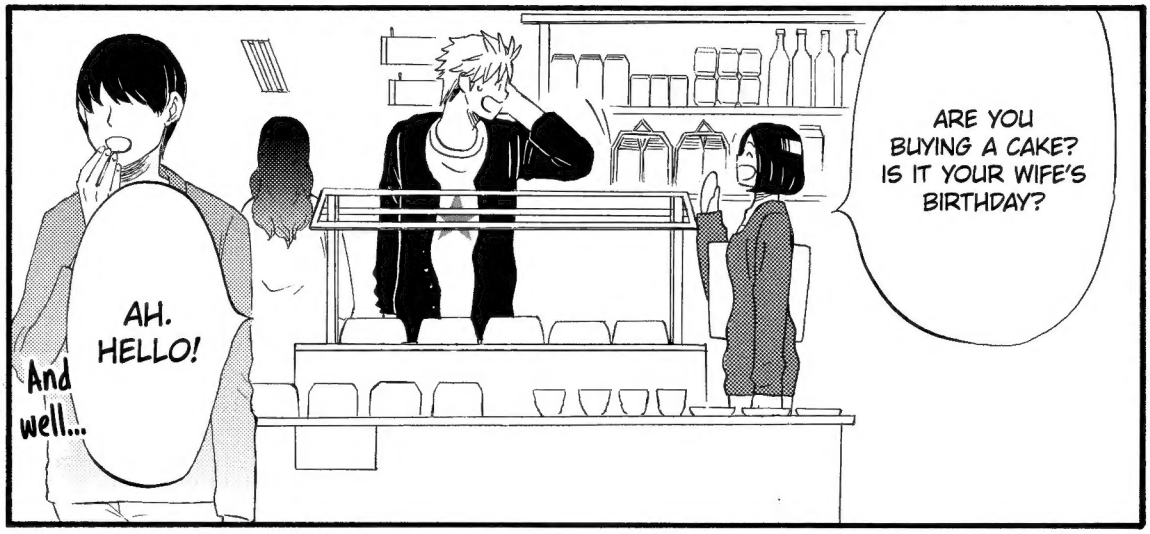

SUPERMARKET

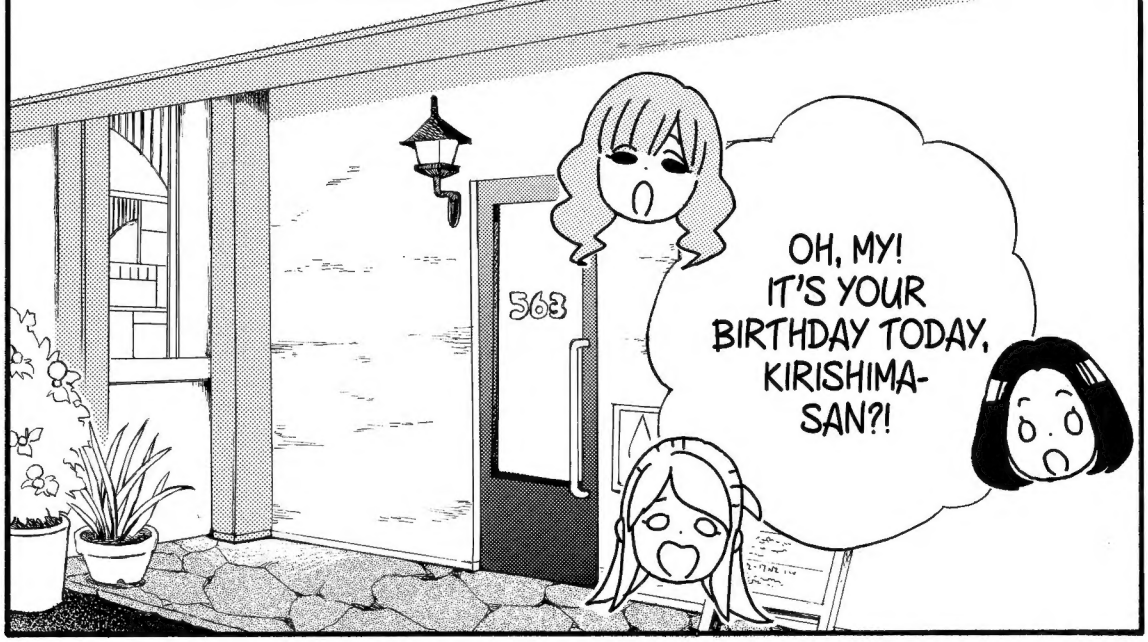

I MEAN... WE'RE MARRIED, BUT THERE'S NO LOVE.
I DON'T THINK SHE'LL BE GIVING ME A PRESENT LATER, EITHER...


ROLL CAKE
ROLL CAKE
...

OH, WHAT A SURPRISE!


I DON'T DISLIKE SWEETS, BUT FOR SOME REASON I ONLY EAT THEM ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS LIKE THIS.
SHOULD I BUY A CAKE FOR MYSELF...?
HMM...


ARE YOU BUYING A CAKE? IS IT YOUR WIFE'S BIRTHDAY?
AH. HELLO!
And well...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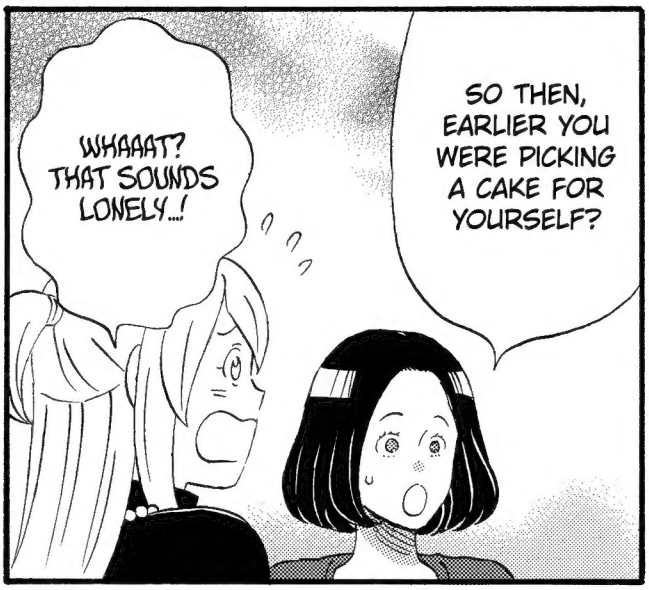
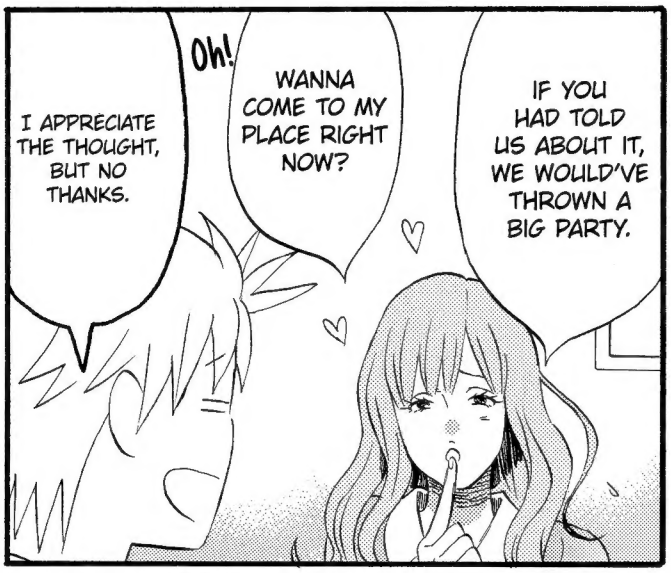
OH, MY! IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY TODAY, KIRISHIMA-SAN?!

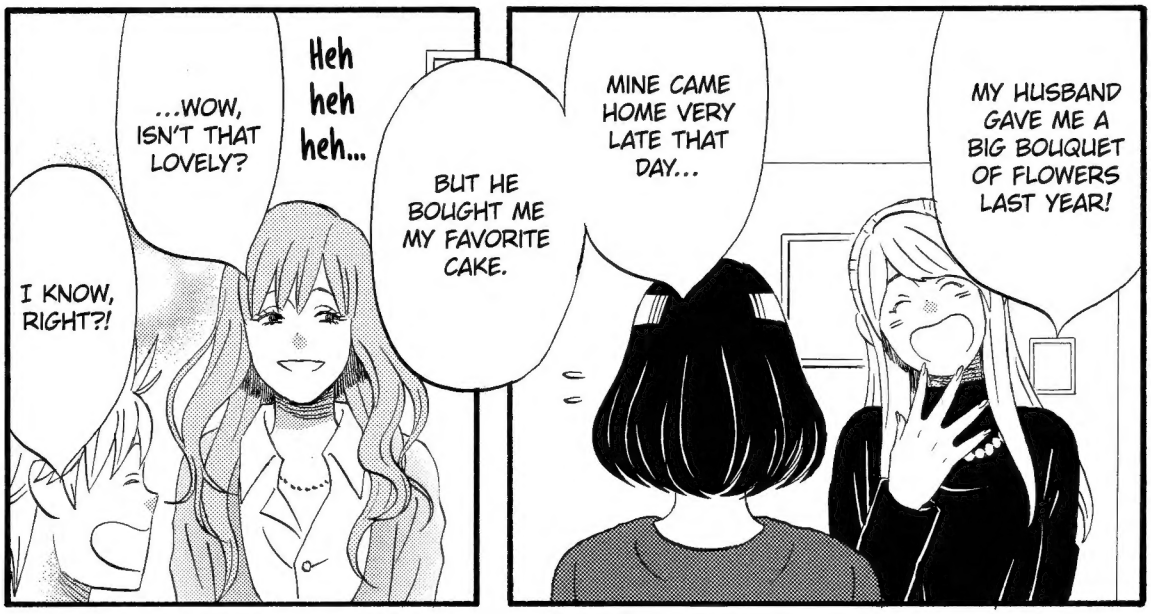

SO THEN, EARLIER YOU WERE PICKING A CAKE FOR YOURSELF?
WHAAAT? THAT SOUNDS LONELY...!

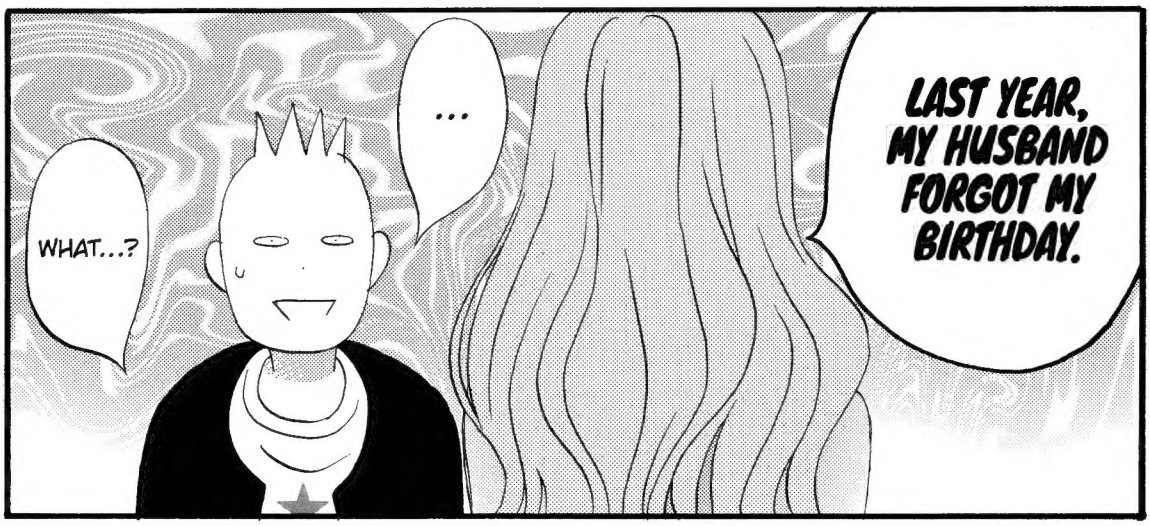
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Yaaay!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
Clap Clap Clap

ANYWAY, UM...
IT'S MY FIRST BIRTHDAY SINCE GETTING MARRIED...
SO I'M HONESTLY NOT SURE WHAT TO EXPECT...


IF YOU HAD TOLD US ABOUT IT, WE WOULD'VE THROWN A BIG PARTY.
Oh!
WANNA COME TO MY PLACE RIGHT NOW?
I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, BUT NO THANKS.

WHAT DO HUSBANDS DO ON THEIR WIVES' BIRTHDAYS?
I SUPPOSE THEY BUY YOU A CAKE, RIGHT?
RIGHT. THAT'S USUALLY THE CASE, I THINK.


MY HUSBAND GAVE ME A BIG BOUQUET OF FLOWERS LAST YEAR!
MINE CAME HOME VERY LATE THAT DAY...
BUT HE BOUGHT ME MY FAVORITE CAKE.
Heh heh heh...
...WOW, ISN'T THAT LOVELY?
I KNOW, RIGHT?!


LAST YEAR, MY HUSBAND FORGOT MY BIRTHDAY.
...
WHAT...?

I CAN FEEL MAKINO-SAN'S LOVE FOR HER HUSBAND...

OHH... IT'S LIKE LAST TIME, WHEN WE TALKED ABOUT THEIR HUSBAND'S GOOD POINTS.

WELL... STUFF LIKE THAT HAPPENS, I GUESS, SO I FORGAVE HIM.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT? DID YOU FORGIVE HIM?

WHAAAT?! THAT'S AWFUL!

Hmph!

Ha ha ha!

I HAD HIM GROVEL NAKED, AND I TOOK A BUNCH OF PHOTOS.

ANYWAY ...

IS HER HUSBAND SERIOUSLY OKAY WITH A WIFE LIKE HER?

He must be a masochist. That's the only plausible explanation...

...

Yes, please!

I HAVE A FOLDER JUST FOR THAT. WANNA SEE IT?

Whaaat?

I FEEL LIKE IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I WAS IN A SITUATION WHERE I HAD NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS...

TO CELEBRATE MY BIRTHDAY WITH.

...

MY EX DUMPED ME RIGHT AFTER I WAS LAID OFF...

BUT MAN, WE WERE RATHER AFFECTIONATE.

Heh heh...

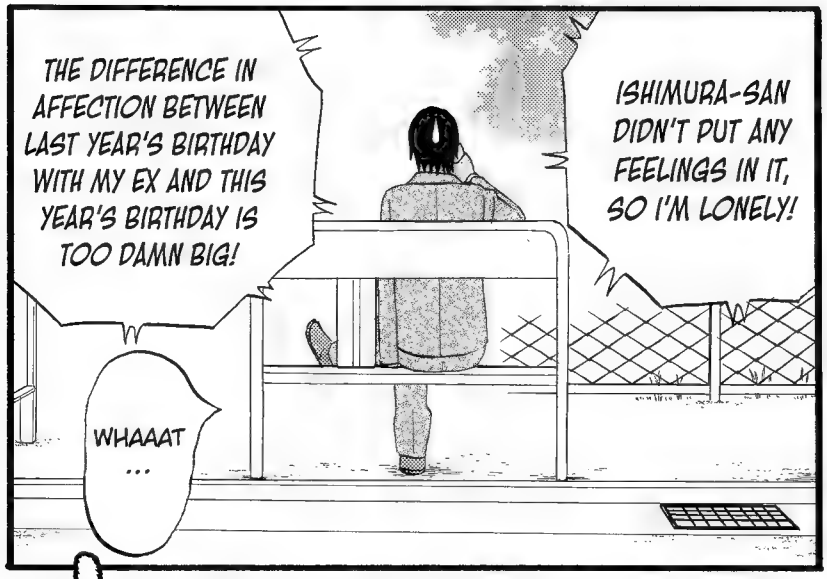
Ring

Kirishima Shirou

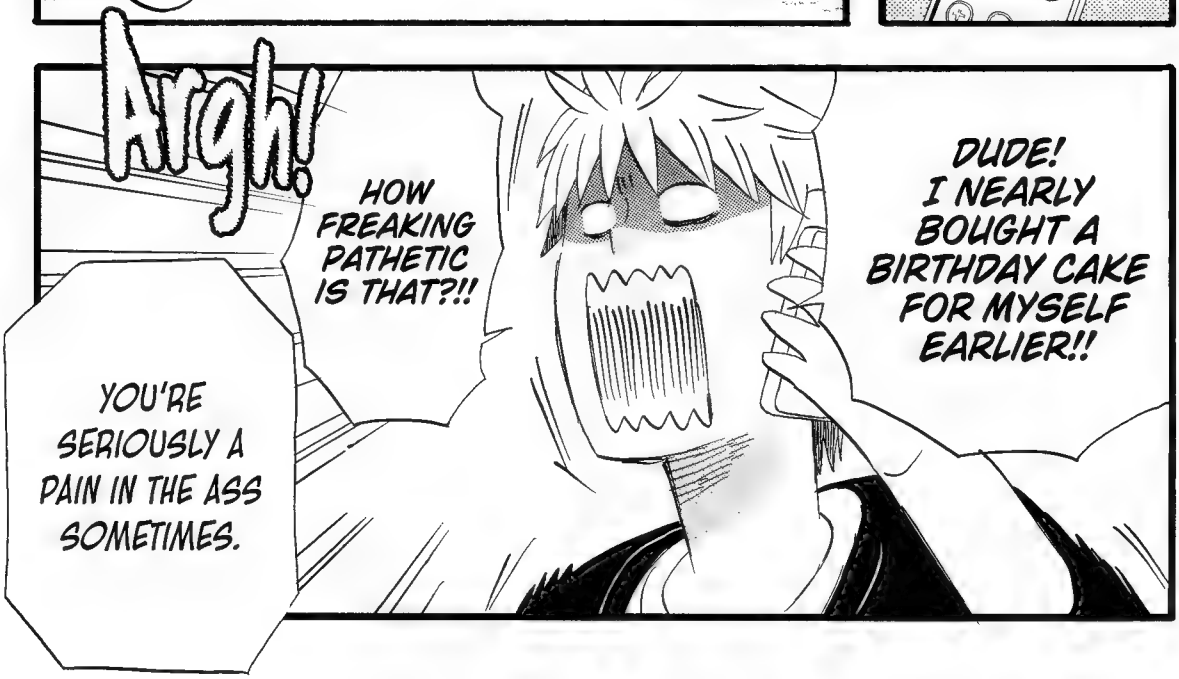
Ring

OHH! RIGHT...!
IT'S... MY BIRTHDAY TODAY.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MAN.

HEY, WHAT'S UP?
WHASSA MATTER, KIRISHIMA?


THE DIFFERENCE IN AFFECTION BETWEEN LAST YEAR'S BIRTHDAY WITH MY EX AND THIS YEAR'S BIRTHDAY IS TOO DAMN BIG!
ISHIMURA-SAN DIDN'T PUT ANY FEELINGS IN IT, SO I'M LONELY!
WHAAAT ...

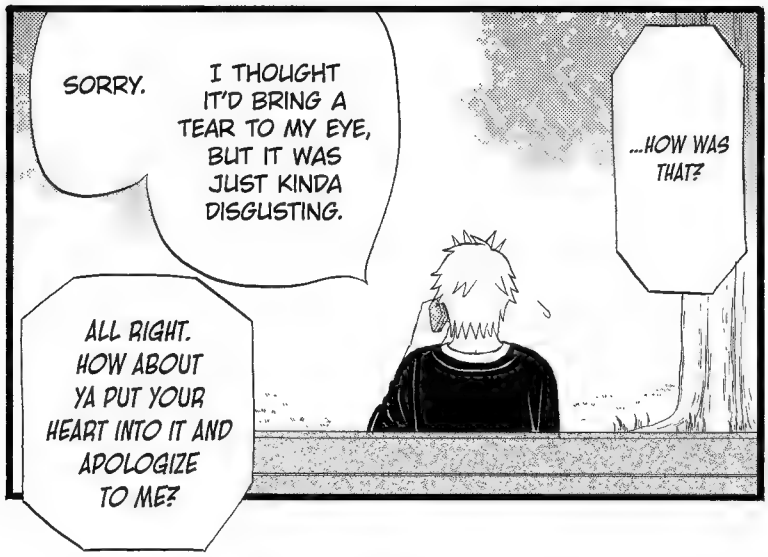
...
DO IT AGAIN. PUT YOUR HEART IN IT.
HUH?


Argh!
HOW FREAKING PATHETIC IS THAT?!!
DUDE! I NEARLY BOUGHT A BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR MYSELF EARLIER!!
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY A PAIN IN THE ASS SOMETIMES.

KIRISHIMA... HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
12:42
Kirishima Shirou
05:12
Mute
Dial Pad
Speaker

...
ALL RIGHT.

THANK YA SO MUCH, MAN... FOR BEIN' MY FRIEND...
THESE FEELINGS I HAVE CAN'T BE CONVEYED THROUGH A SIMPLE PHONE CALL, BUT...
I'D LOVE TO THANK YOUR MOM FOR BRINGING YA INTO THIS WORLD...


SORRY.
I THOUGHT IT'D BRING A TEAR TO MY EYE, BUT IT WAS JUST KINDA DISGUSTING.
...HOW WAS THAT?
ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT YA PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT AND APOLOGIZE TO ME?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ME! I BOUGHT IT AT A CONVENIENCE STORE, BUT A CAKE'S STILL A CAKE!
SINCE MY WIFE WON'T CELEBRATE WITH ME, I'LL DO IT BY MYSELF!
HA HA HA HA!
Happy Birthday to meee!

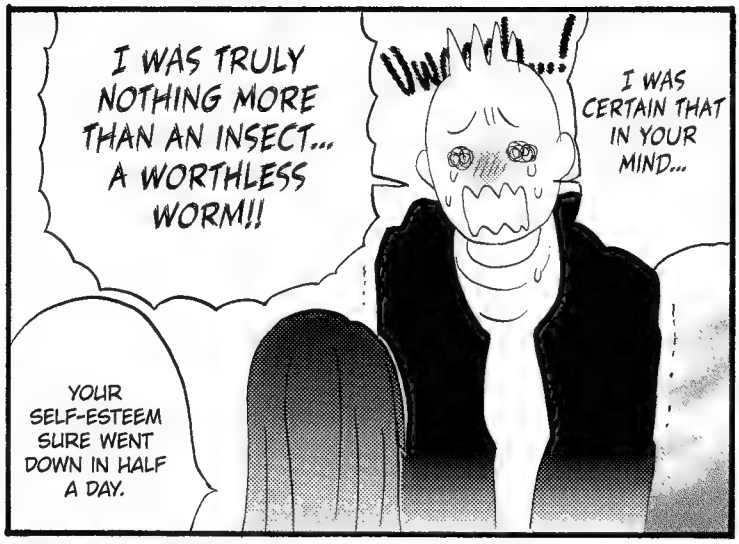
...ANYWAY, JOKES ASIDE...

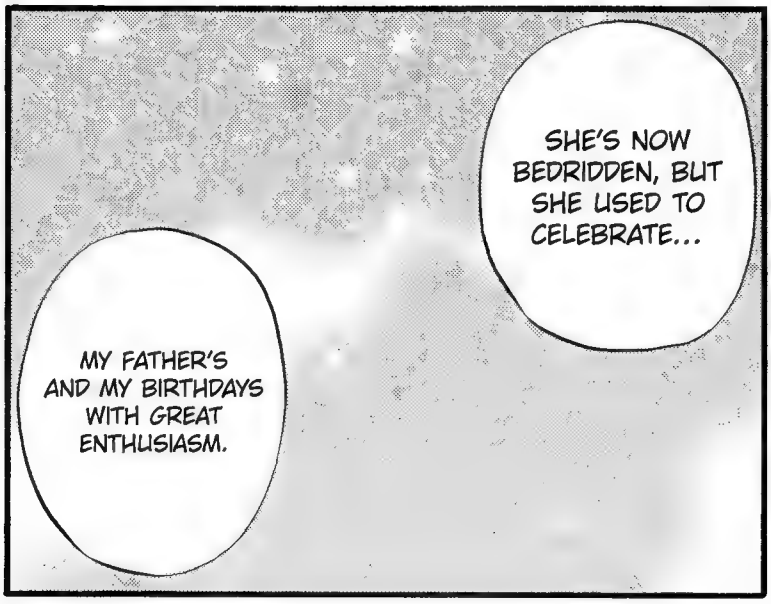
Happy Birthday Shirou-kun

I'M HOOOME!
WELCOME BACK.

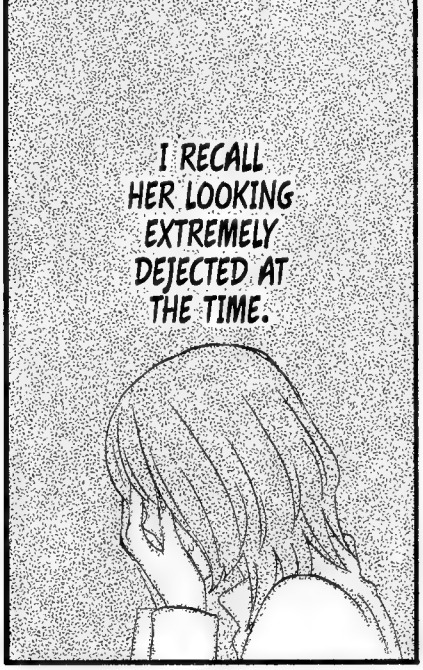
...ACTUALLY, AREN'T YOU A BIT TOO SURPRISED?
WELL, WHEN YOU THINK OF BIRTHDAYS, YOU THINK OF BIRTHDAY CAKES.
BUT I MEAN...!
Are you sick?! Is Hell going to freeze over?!!
NO WAY...?!
YOU BOUGHT ME A BIRTHDAY CAKE, ISHIMURA-SAN?!!

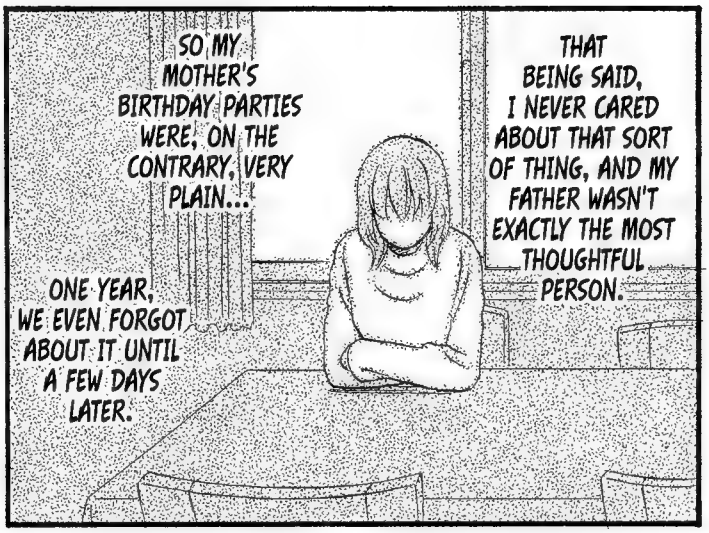
IT'S ALWAYS A SPECIAL DAY, NO MATTER YOUR AGE.
ANYWAY... BIRTHDAYS DESERVE TO BE CELEBRATED.


I WAS TRULY NOTHING MORE THAN AN INSECT... A WORTHLESS WORM!!
Uwaaah...!
I WAS CERTAIN THAT IN YOUR MIND...
YOUR SELF-ESTEEM SURE WENT DOWN IN HALF A DAY.

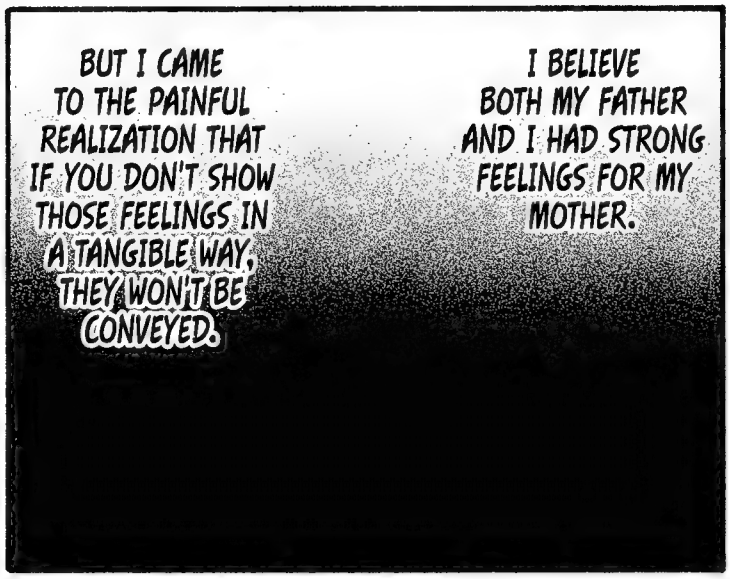

SHE'S NOW BEDRIDDEN, BUT SHE USED TO CELEBRATE...
MY FATHER'S AND MY BIRTHDAYS WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM.

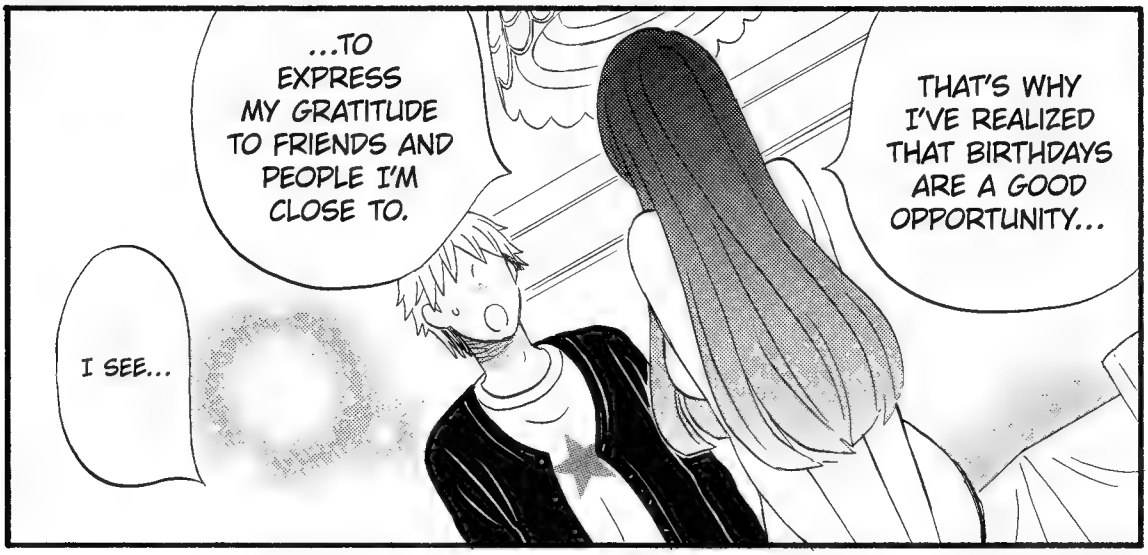
MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME THAT.

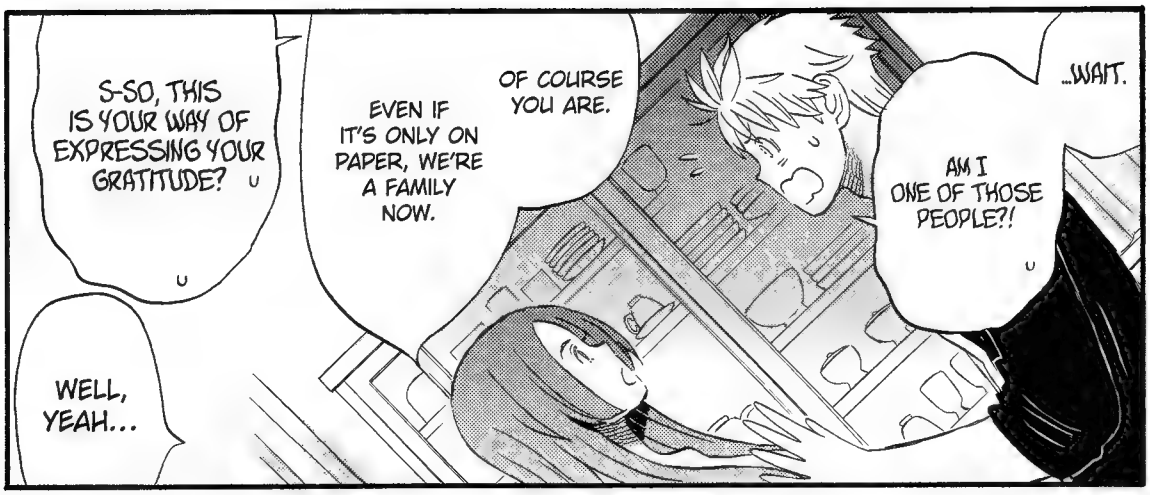

I RECALL HER LOOKING EXTREMELY DEJECTED AT THE TIME.


SO, MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES WERE, ON THE CONTRARY, VERY PLAIN...
THAT BEING SAID, I NEVER CARED ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING, AND MY FATHER WASN'T EXACTLY THE MOST THOUGHTFUL PERSON.
ONE YEAR, WE EVEN FORGOT ABOUT IT UNTIL A FEW DAYS LATER.

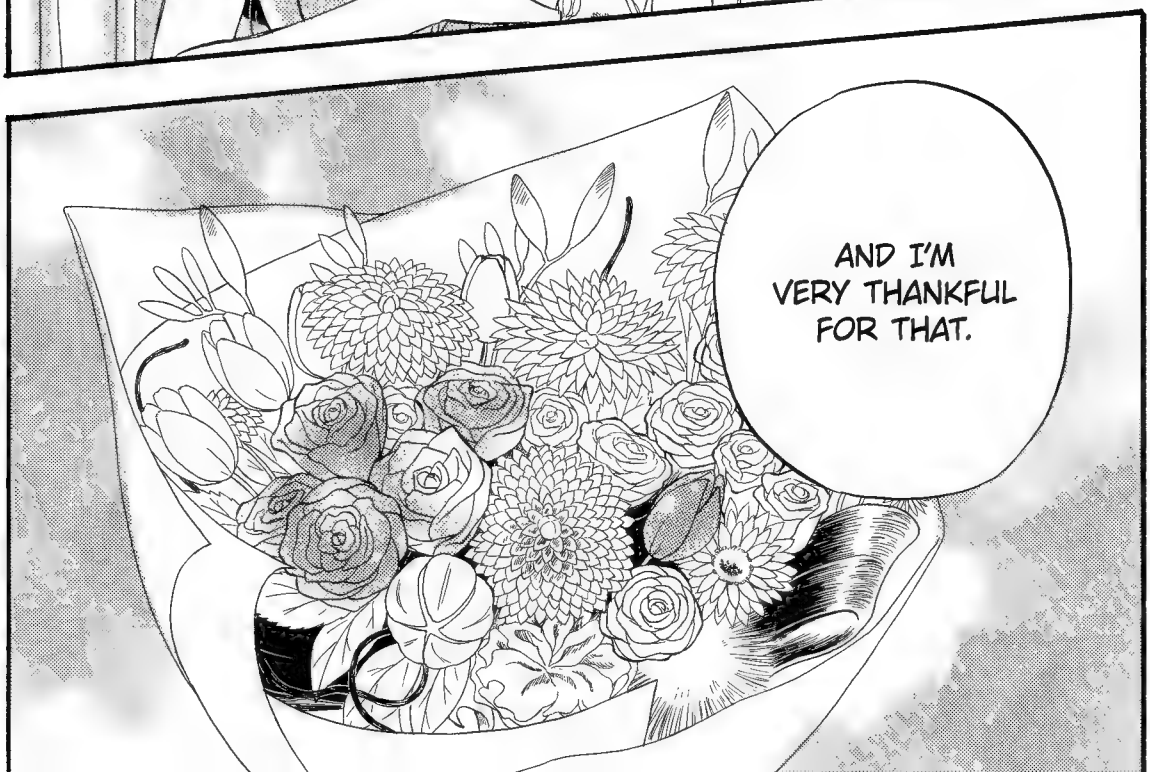
FURTHERMORE, PEOPLE'S TIME IS WITHOUT A DOUBT FINITE.
IF YOU DON'T SHOW IT WHEN YOU CAN, THE OPPORTUNITY WILL PASS YOU BY...


BUT I CAME TO THE PAINFUL REALIZATION THAT IF YOU DON'T SHOW THOSE FEELINGS IN A TANGIBLE WAY, THEY WON'T BE CONVEYED.
I BELIEVE BOTH MY FATHER AND I HAD STRONG FEELINGS FOR MY MOTHER.


...TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO FRIENDS AND PEOPLE I'M CLOSE TO.
THAT'S WHY I'VE REALIZED THAT BIRTHDAYS ARE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY...
I SEE...


S-SO, THIS IS YOUR WAY OF EXPRESSING YOUR GRATITUDE?
WELL, YEAH...
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY ON PAPER, WE'RE A FAMILY NOW.
OF COURSE YOU ARE.
...WAIT.
AM I ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE?!

YOU WORK FOR MY SAKE EVERY DAY...
Rustle...
REGARDLESS OF HOW THINGS GOT THIS WAY...
YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO COOKS FOR ME, WASHES MY CLOTHES, AND LIVES WITH ME.


AND I'M VERY THANKFUL FOR THAT.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, KIRISHIMA-KUN!

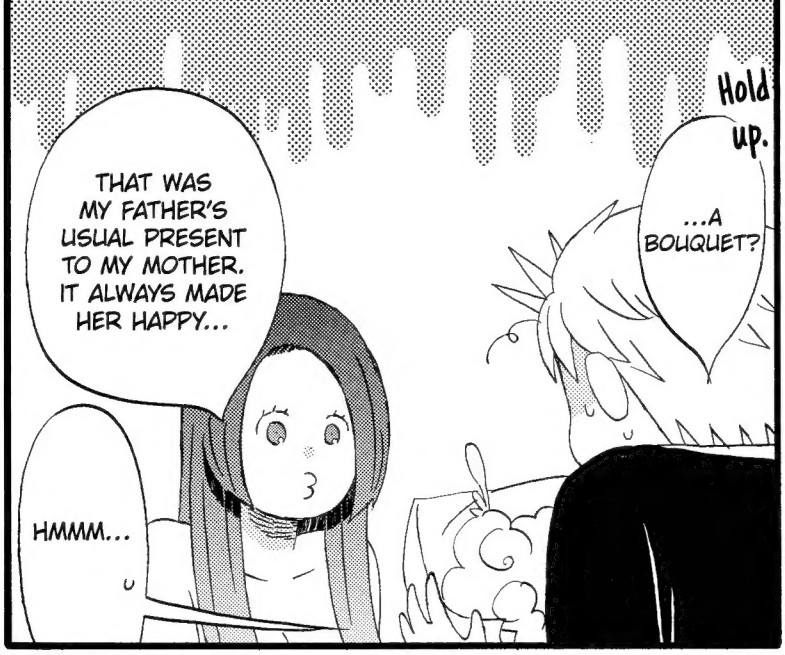
daah!

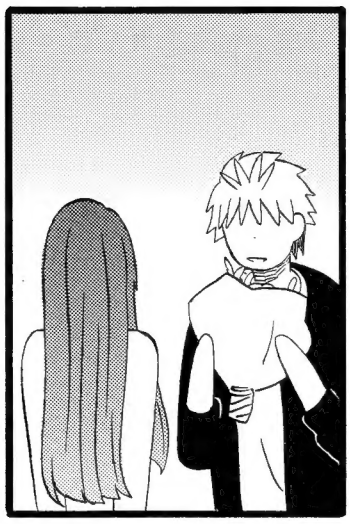
サ

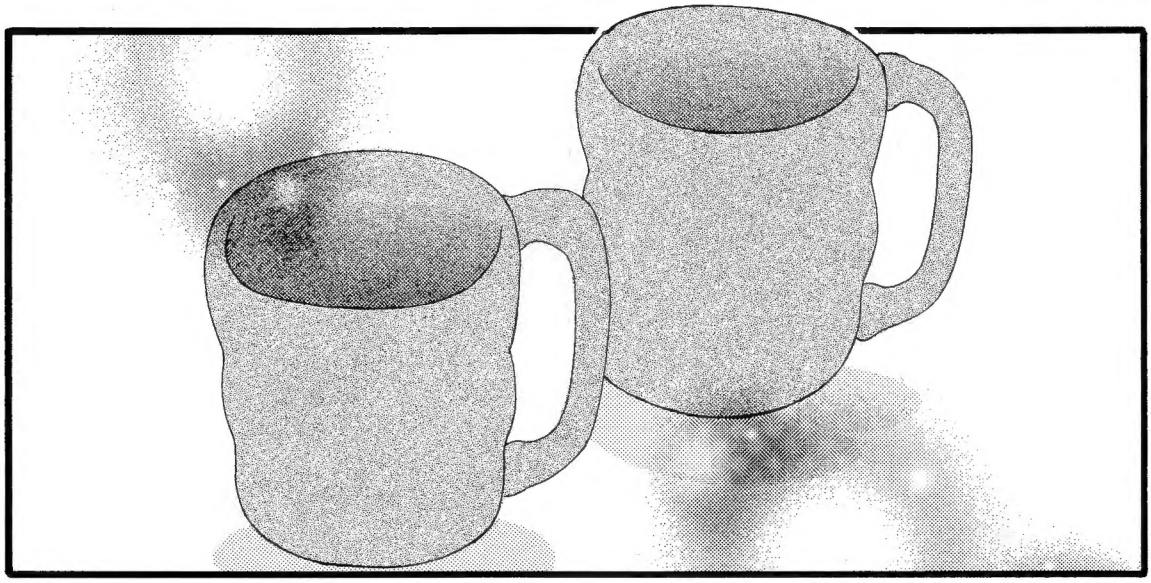
Ta-

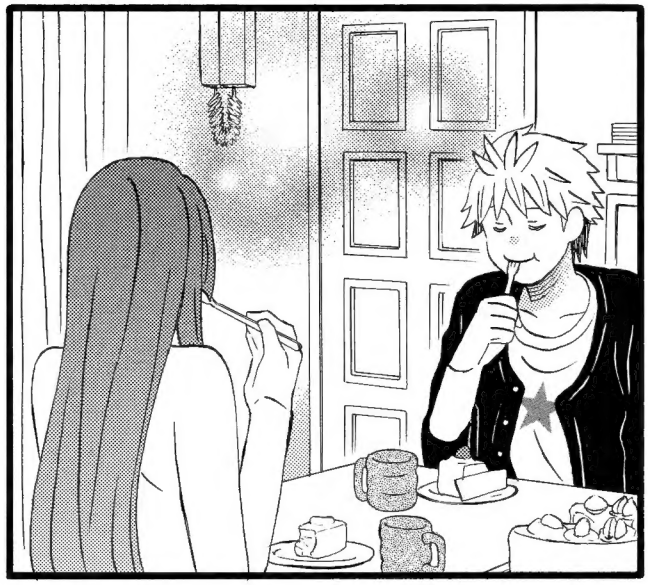
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

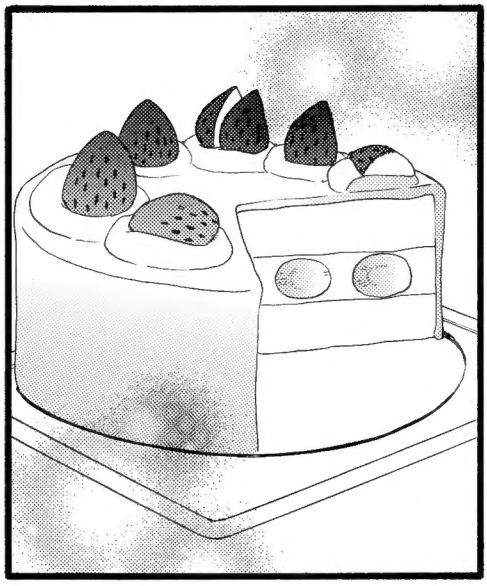
ISHIMURA-SAN...

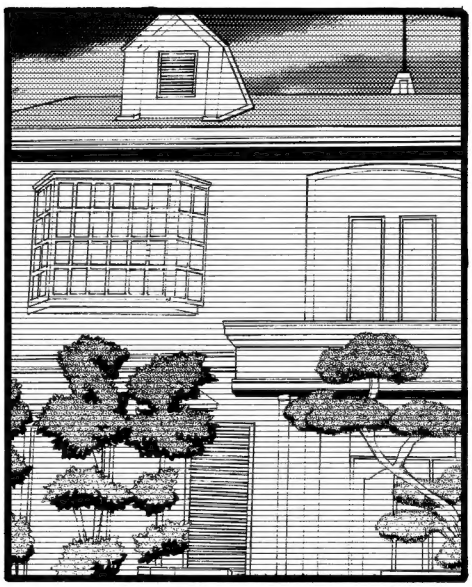

THAT WAS MY FATHER'S USUAL PRESENT TO MY MOTHER. IT ALWAYS MADE HER HAPPY...
HMMM...
Hold up.
...A BOUQUET?

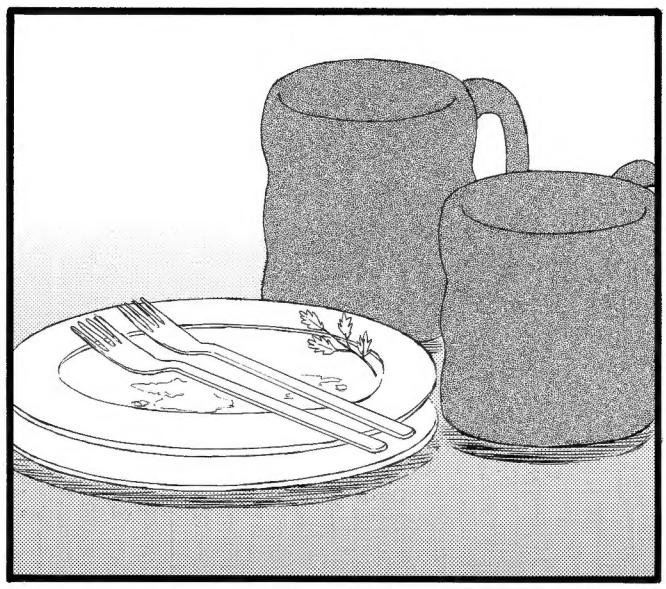




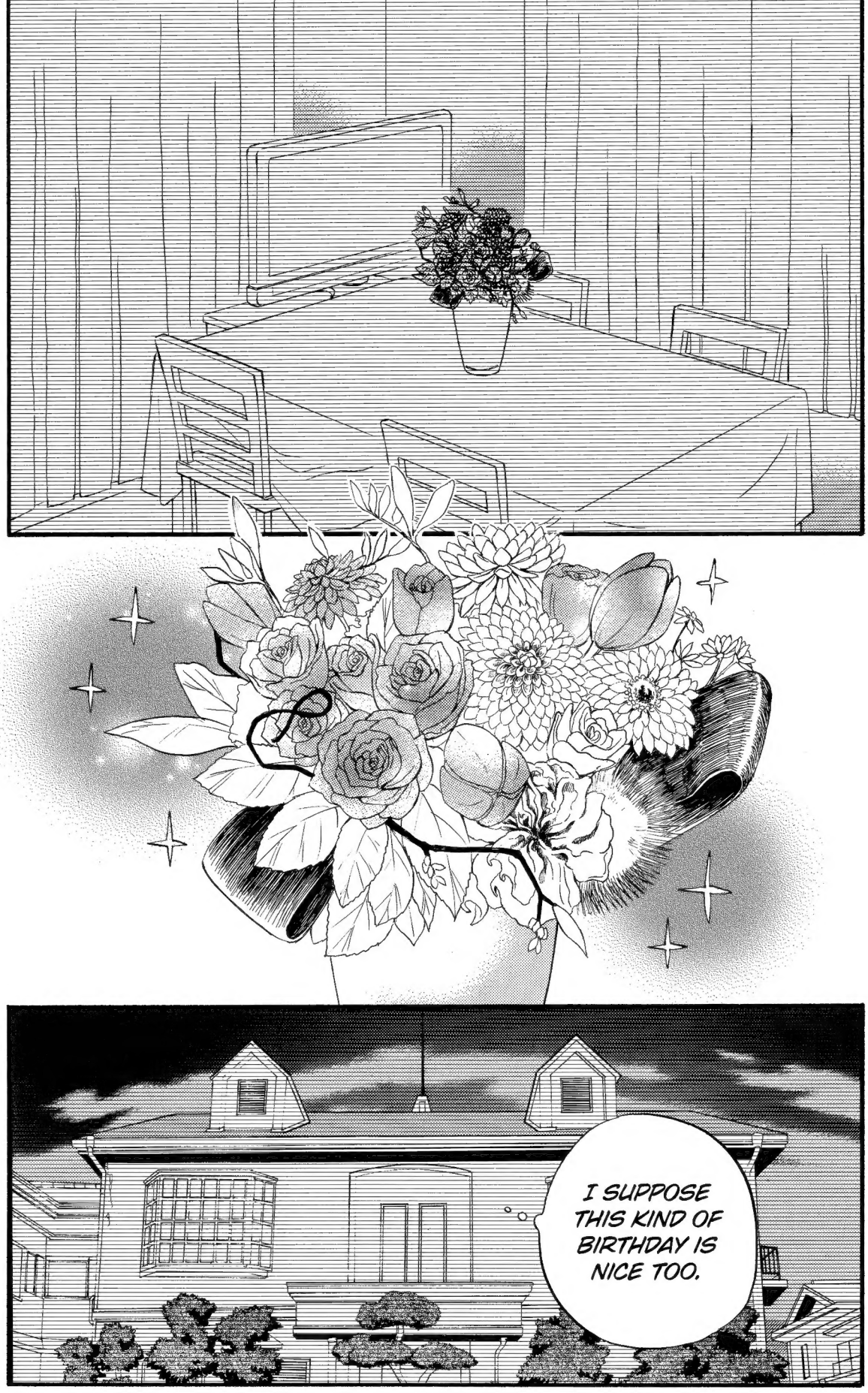








IT WASN'T EXACTLY "LOVEY-DOVEY," BUT...


I SUPPOSE THIS KIND OF BIRTHDAY IS NICE TOO.